

# SEFER



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# Sefer

2005

According to the *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, the word “**Sefer**” is taken from the Hebrew and means “work of writing” or “book.”

The SEFER is written, edited, and produced by students of Charleston Southern University. The views expressed within do not necessarily express the views of Charleston Southern University's Administration, Faculty, Staff, or general student body.

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## South Carolina September

The road is winding right out in front  
as green gold leaves from branches dip and sway  
along the pavement.

Shadows lengthen, days shorten, and  
my mind drifts --

winding,  
tumbling,  
up and down.

The beginning of the road seemed  
as if it were straighter and clearer.

Summer let the cares drift to sleep  
on a hammock blowing in the breeze  
between an oak and a birch  
all silver in the sunshine,

like a newborn offering her  
last yawn of a lullaby.

Those same gold green leaves  
will soon abandon their home,  
fall to the ground and crackle  
beneath my feet.

*~Claire Baker*

## Remembering Puerto Rico

We start walking to Abuela's house  
just as the sun is beginning to set.  
The humid air begins to cool down, and  
I close my eyes to bask  
in the atmosphere.  
One by one, the coquis begin to chirp,  
seeming to sing to the rhythm that we walk to.  
The streets smell like garbage,  
but no one seems to notice anymore.  
We pass a group of old men sitting on a porch,  
playing a game of dominoes.  
The houses all have iron gates,  
and we rattle them as we walk by.  
A loud truck passes us,  
blaring some old salsa music.  
The trees that hang over the sidewalk  
block our path  
and we walk across the littered street.  
Some kids are playing barefoot in the street  
and we stop for a moment to watch their game.  
We wave to Abuela's neighbors, who are having a party,  
and we call to Abuela  
to open the gate for us.  
She opens it and invites us in  
for dinner-I love her arroz con pollo.  
The cold air conditioning blows on our faces  
as we walk in the house.  
And we close the door behind us.

*~Jonathan Torres*

## Falling

The cold morning beats her face like a broom.

Light touch preceding the stinging sensation,  
*Sweeping her to a world beyond her own.*

The autumn wind spins her hair like a wheel.

Careless locks embracing the affectionate breeze,  
*Driving her to a place recognized only in dreams.*

The dead leaves wake her like a bell.

Noisy ashes burnt by this fiery life,  
Ringing the truth within her smothered spirit....

Nothing can take you away except yourself.

~E. Ashley Glenn

## The Sun

Oh to touch what you have touched  
Or to see what you have seen.  
To light the face of Helen,  
Or to grasp the restless sea.

To shine as bright with passion  
Or to paint the sky as you,  
Burning the clouds brilliant shades  
Of reds, oranges and yellows.

To guard the gates of Paradise  
And to bask in Heaven's glory  
And rain radiant beams of love  
Down that vanquish our gloom and shadows.

For without your warmth from above,  
Our lives are shadowed in night.  
Yet as your beacon shines we will know  
You have risen and blessed us with a new day.

*~Christopher Freshman*



## His Enemies

These flames that drown us and  
These waters that burn us and  
These things that aren't here and  
Those things that are--

We are no longer enemies and  
Always were and  
Yet somehow always  
Will be.

Like a patch of  
Snow in August  
Amidst February  
Grass as green in May,  
We are a quilt—  
A quilt of things—  
Things I do not want to do and  
Not things I do want to do.

Our enmity ought not be and  
This is a poem of  
Ought nots and  
Always wills and  
Never should'ves and  
Are no longer,

And those things and  
These things and  
These flames and  
These waters and  
These ought nots

Are us.

I am an ought not;  
I am a Paul of Saul.

*~Jason Fry*

## The Light on the Edge of the Horizon

*Brian Hull*

Neither of them said anything as they walked down the road that crossed the train tracks. They were silent not because they thought about it but because they didn't. If one of them had thought about it they would have had to say something to cover the awkward silence, but because neither of them did, the silence was comfortable and sweet.

It wasn't until days later that it occurred to him to remember that horrible day when his friend lost both the woman that mattered in his life and the sick smell of overturned train cars in midtown. And when he remembered to think about it he was amazed that anyone could still walk down that street squinting into the sun, and not say anything.

*Archways ~ Will McElmurray*



## A House

A worn house sits  
Lovely in structure,  
Sits quietly waiting  
To be made new again.

The paint is chipped,  
Peeling with age.  
The door hangs limp  
On its rusty hinge.

The porch is weak,  
The floor boards worn.  
The roof full leaks,  
The owner mourns.

So many things  
In need of doing

Things she meant to do  
But didn't –  
That would have made  
Her house beautiful.

*~Sara Armstrong*

## Morning

Sun rises in the east,  
Dew on Easter lily glistens.  
Quick mist of rain,  
Spells everything new.  
You, asleep in the meadow.  
Water-laden flowers drip down  
To tickle your nose.  
Eyes flutter open.  
Air smells fresh  
Of grass and spring rain.  
Bright, red, ladybug  
Lands on your outstretched hand.  
Gasp as mammoth butterflies spring up  
Everywhere  
And the breeze carries them away.  
The moon, still in the sky,  
Is joined by the largest star.  
Light glitters through your eyelids.

*~Lauren Robertson*

## The Pardon

I should have never brought the  
Weed into my garden.  
Once this weed had sprouted  
She was nurtured, loved, and watered,  
Shielded, shaded, and supported;  
Never did my tending slow—  
Till she'd finished all she'd grow  
And said, "I don't need you anymore."

Friends see me on the street.  
When they greet  
I toss it off with a scoff,  
"I'm on my feet,  
My garden's fine— divine—  
It's just a weed"—sardonically.

Not a weed of doubt but  
Of assured insecurity.  
Still straining from my soil the  
Precious proteins of the peat.

Now, Who am I?—not a farmer,  
Just a young man in the summer.  
The summer that makes  
Or breaks the year.  
In the spring nothing was planted.  
The fertile season taken for granted.  
The season spent not like the ant—  
But grabbing green all that I wanted.

I must reap what I have sown.  
It's now known of what I'm scared.  
Her stench is all about the air,  
Her roots entangle through my hair.  
To rid my garden of the weed  
"A fire is necessary, indeed!"—  
Advice is free, just the pains of the  
Heart not the advisee's,  
But the fee is on me, voluntarily.

True the fire will devour  
    This red weed, this fallen flower.  
But my soil will bestow upon me the seeds  
    Of past retold as the  
Ashes fertilize seed trapped deep within  
    My soil below.  
She will again grow,  
    A power she can't control.  
She may not be alone, but  
Her fibers have taken hold, the tap root deep  
    In my earth— my garden.

Maybe time will end my grief.  
    A flourishing flower will I meet.  
    Perhaps by August I'll be complete;  
The weed a distant memory,

Till then I will endure to show  
    Ignorance with bravado.  
And pray the pardon  
    Will occur.

*~Richie Pound*

## **A Black Momma to Her Child**

There is much to be said of a white face  
that shows kindness  
of ones that show hate  
of all those that do not know you, but use your race to  
identify you.

There is much to be said about  
discrimination and just complaining about it.  
There is more to be said about unsolved homicides,  
murder, unjust laws, secret love and mulatto children,  
as years and years go by and the same things still go on.

How can I tell you of kindness without telling you about  
hate as well?

Of these things I do not want you to know,  
for you are not my cohort.  
So I will shelter you from the world  
and tell you of others things I know.  
But, other than that, there is nothing to be said.  
Nothing.

*~Shaquana Grant*



## Fire Escape

My parents dragged me to redemption,  
Sunday mornings  
Evenings too.  
Displaying myself like Rodin's Thinker  
My shadow rested over the pew.  
Praying perhaps or being convicted,  
Neither category  
Fit my condition.  
Lost soul in a corrupt world, seeking for  
A passage of sheltered transition.

Studying the patterns in the injured carpet,  
Red as blood  
Spilling everywhere.  
*Searching for an exit, like a hostage*  
Imprisoned in this temple of despair.  
Finding nothing but existing pain,  
Preached from the pulpit  
Resting in the pews.  
Discovering you can never explain the presence of  
God and the dormant faith inside of you.

~E. Ashley Glenn

*The Henry Timrod Library ~ Katie E. Lee*



## Porch Rocker Memoirs: A Short History of the Henry Timrod Library

*Katie E. Lee*

I'm sitting on my front porch, drinking a glass of sweet tea and reading one of the many books that I have hoarded with the greatest of intentions, but as of now, have never managed to begin reading. It's a typical summer day in Summerville, South Carolina—hot and humid, and I'm struggling to ignore the droplets of sweat that are running down the valley of my back and forming into beads on my upper lip. I am one of the town's many "porch-rockers"—those from all age groups who bask in the lazy days of summer, the tender scents of spring, and the frosty musk of autumn and who become giddy at the thought of taking life's daily tasks out onto the porch.

I live in a modest white house in the heart of the historic district—a house that was built in the early 1900s, a house that my grandfather purchased for \$10,000 in 1964 and lived in with his family for nearly forty years, and the house where I now live and treasure the memories that I have made here—as a child and now as an adult.

It is not possible to count the mornings and afternoons spent on this screened front porch with my grandmother. We sat in rocking chairs ate fudge popsicles in summer and drank hot chocolate in the winter. We sat together in silence and read.

My grandmother has always been a voracious reader, and she helped to spark my love of literature. She has given me many books throughout my life.

Only two blocks from my cottage the Henry Timrod Library stands as everlasting evidence of its nameless creators and as a monument to the culture of the town in whose center it marks. It is now called the Henry Timrod Library, but found its beginning in a reading circle of young women just like myself who met on the porches of their homes to read and discuss the masterpieces of their day and the days that had come before them. Long before I knew how the library began, I was drawn to it. I was drawn because of my grandmother's love for it and because of my own passion for the written word.

Every fall, just as the new school year was fully underway, I watched and waited for the small sign that the librarian posted on the grounds of the Timrod. “Annual Book Sale, Saturday.” As soon as I saw the sign for the first time that season, I would mark my calendar and remind my grandmother numerous times before the date arrived that she had promised we would go and rummage around.

The library has always been a bit ominous and spooky to me, and I love that feeling. My first memory of it, long before my grandma and I ventured to one of the book sales, is of the bats that swarm the room of the old building—built in 1915, eighteen years after the young women known as the Chautauqua Reading Circle formed in October 1897—and land atop the chimney in the evenings. I still like to drive by, just as dusk is looming over our town, and try to catch a glimpse of the strange creatures.

The wood floors groaned as I stepped lightly through the library doors. I released the knob and waited for the sound of the latch to snap back into place. A tiny bell pinged against the glass laid within the heavy door frames.

“Hey,” said the librarian from across the desk in the corner of the open room. “How can I help you this afternoon?”

“I want to get a library card. Fifteen dollars?”

She closed her eyes and nodded as she breathed a muffled *mmmm hmmm*. “Fifteen is for a family membership. Patrons, well, patrons are fifty dollars or more.”

I smiled. “I think a family membership will be just fine for me.”

“Okay. Well, let me get you to fill out some paperwork, then,” she said.

As I moved the pen across the application she had set before me, I could smell the furniture polish and wood of the pine-planked floors and the stale pages of books that had been loaned and borrowed too many times to keep count.

The slight breeze from unpredictable autumn weather blew a long oak branch into one of the side windows. Voices came from the sidewalk outside and only a few blocks beyond Central Avenue, the afternoon train rum-

bled clumsily through the center of town.

"Have you ever been here before?" she asked, raising a dark eyebrow over the rim of the round lenses in her glasses.

"Yes ma'am. I used to come with my grandma a long time ago."

"Well, that's real nice," she said, casting a tender look. "When you finish filling that out, I'll show you around. I'm sure we've gotten some new things in since you were here last."

After she wrote my name and the date onto the little paper card, I slid it neatly into my wallet and looked around at the floor-to-ceiling shelves placed like dominoes, strategically and carefully, throughout the main room.

"Are you ready?" she asked.

As I stared at the 42,000 books that rest upon the stark white shelves, I imagined the nineteen young women who began such a massive undertaking. I saw them sitting on the white wrap-around porch of a house in town. I saw their long flowing dresses of silk and taffeta and cotton. I saw the rocking chairs in which they each sat and heard the squeak of the planks underfoot as they moved their weight from front to back, their petticoats rustling against the wood.

I saw each of them—light hair and dark. Some of them thin. Some of them not-so-thin. Some of them somewhere in between. Some pretty faces. Some more plain. Some with hands worn and cracked from chores. Others with hands smooth and pale, as white as freshly laundered linen—so white and fragile that the blue veins could be seen thinning from their knuckles. And I heard the chaos of voices as they held a conversation—a conversation that linked each of them together as companions and as young women who each yearned for knowledge and growth at a time in history when education for women was considered inconsequential.

The librarian's hand swept through the air and pointed.

"This is the Catherine Stewart Room that was added to the back of the library in 1986 in honor of one of the library's longtime librarians. It houses only books that are

about South Carolina or by South Carolina authors.”

We talked for a moment more and then she allowed me to sit at a small square table in front of one of the windows. I told her that I was interested in researching the library’s history.

“Oh, that is a lovely idea,” she said. “We have a few documents in the Stewart Room, but unfortunately there is not a great deal written down that deals with Timrod’s beginnings. It seems everything has been lost.”

“Really?”

“Only a research paper by a local librarian and a one-page document entitled ‘A Short History of the Timrod Library’ that is undated and unsigned. We think that it was probably written around 1932.”

“I would love to read what you do have,” I said. And she was gone to make copies of the documents for me.

Thirteen of the original nineteen women formed the Timrod Circle, named for the Confederate Poet Laureate Henry Timrod, in 1908. They rented a small room where they offered their services as volunteer librarians so that others in the town could enjoy the collection of books that had accumulated. That same year, membership reached thirty, allowing a charter to be written that pronounced it the Henry Timrod Literary and Library Association. And thus the library was born. It is now one of only several membership or subscription libraries that still exist in the United States, and is one of only two in South Carolina.

I stared out the window in front of the table that is just large enough for a book, a piece of paper, and a pen, and again I see the women. They are moving through the aisles and wandering from one shelf to another in the newly constructed library that opened to the public on April 15, 1915. I imagine their anxiety and excitement during the days and nights before the doors opened, as each of them took turns organizing the volumes that generous and thrilled townspeople had donated, or that they had donated themselves or worked to purchase by planning fund-raisers.

Now the library stands as a reminder to those who drive by, walk past, or enter, of the common dream of nineteen very different young women and the way in which they changed an entire town. They were part of a movement across America at the turn of the century that birthed



libraries, promoted reading, and encouraged the love of knowledge.

I left the library with a stack of papers in hand and a strange gaiety at the thought of my chance to spend time there, reveling in history and my own imagination.

Tonight I jog by the library just as dusk is falling upon the streets of Summerville, and I once again see the bats circling the roof. I count about nineteen or twenty. I hear the strange chaotic chatter that they make to one another. No one knows why they are drawn to this place, and it dawns on me that I have only just begun to figure that out myself.

## **The Mustang**

There is no mistaking  
that silver horse  
as it gallops faster to reach  
my backseat  
as I barrel forward at the  
posted speed limit.

*~Lauren Robertson*



## Spent

Wrenched and broken,  
Gasping for air,  
Staring into space  
And finding nothing there—

Six nails digging in the dirt,  
Dragged face-down in the ground  
Looking for a moment  
No longer to be found—

Spread upon the blanket of life,  
Torturous thoughts caressing the heart  
Hollowed of all humanity,  
Waiting for the last release to depart—

Unrefined yet purified,  
Twisted and chained to the post and  
Reaching out with an arch of the back  
Longing only answered by a ghost.

Broken and bleeding,  
Caked with blood-dampened dirt,  
Pawing continuously  
Now unable to feel the hurt.

Searching for the ending rhythm  
Only a body contains.  
Ravished of life  
Lingering desire, the only remains.

*~Tabatha Blevins*

## Anon

Can you see me?

I feel shrouded by the name they've given me and that I must be barely distinguishable here in the obscure peripheral boundaries of the classroom.

But I am here.

The call me *non-traditional*; a euphemism meant to soften the fact that I am *middle-aged*; a euphemism meant to soften the fact that I am old.

I don't mind being old.

I do. however, reject my non-ness. How is my college experience any less traditional than yours? I, like you, have angst at the thought of mid-terms and finals. I, like you, juggle classes, work, family, and friends. And I, like you, strive for good grades while looking forward to graduation day.

So I'm not young...Do I need a scarlet A on my chest or a classification to overstate the obvious?

If we're going to differentiate and segregate, let's broaden the scope. Non-African, non-Asian, non-red, non-Caucasian, non-female, non-male, non-feeble, non-able, non-Christian, non-Jew.

I'm non-traditional. How about you?

I see my fellow grey-haired, balding comrades while crossing campus. We smile at one another and nod a

commiserating “yes, I see you.” There is comfort in knowing we are not alone in our anonymity.

You can approach us, you know? Our non-ness won’t rub off on you.

*~Linda Lemacks*

## A Lone Rower

Can two loves indeed  
exist in the heart of one host?  
Can the house of two loves  
build in the same place?  
Will not a tear  
quench the fire?  
Or will the fire consume  
one house?  
Or else both?

I dreamt  
of a pond of white ducks  
with beaks of blue  
soaring majestically atop the water  
or else pulsating, floating, lying.  
And I,  
a lone rower,  
in their midst.

I dreamt of her eyes.  
Of your eyes,  
soaring majestically along  
into the heavens  
like a fire.  
And I,  
A lone rower,  
in their midst.

*~Jason Fry*

## Anticipation

Sunday drives to church were awkward  
Like the spelling of the word.

Anything said could be risky  
Watch the window and your mouth.  
Kids speak when spoken to  
Watch for your opportunity.  
Any chance missed is your tragedy,  
Resent yourself later. For now,  
Drive on. Leave the past stranded on the road.

*-E. Ashley Glenn*

## Robert Fordham

*Brian Hull*

It began to happen sometime in the late 21<sup>st</sup> century. At least that is when they started to notice it. By its very nature it could not have happened; then, it must have been done both in the future and past and what will be the future present when the present is past. Duplicates, secondary text, sometimes identical, sometimes not, often a word changed, a word misspelled. The most distinguished of poets found to be frauds a hundred years after their deaths; they had borrowed from the most obscure of sources, literary magazines of small school, independently published books, private notes and typed letters yellowed with age. All by Robert. That was what they all shared, the plagiarists of the past who became such after their death in the future. Sometimes it was Robert Ford, or Robert Ham, or Robert Fordham, or just the anonymous Robert or just the pure anonymous anonymous.

In the present of what would later be past Robert Fordham was clerk at a gas station on the corner. He was a lazy construction worker. He was a moderately successful accountant who owned his own business and rented office space in the most urban part of the suburban part of a medium sized American town. He was everywhere. There was no one who was not Robert Fordham, not to mention Hams and Fords alone, but even at this point they were pretty sure they were dealing with the both of them together.

Robert Fordham was walking the expansive hall way that felt strangely large because it was the first time he had been on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the Hoover K. Bell building when it was not packed with a flow of students with bags of books and elbows. The corners of rooms stuck out into the hall and made strange right angles like shoulder blades edging their way rudely into disputed space. The classrooms fit into the building like boxes of different sizes laid out at random, so that a single person was like an ant in a

warehouse crawling between the cracks of adjacent boxes. He passed a man in the hall pushing the head of a mop into a yellow hard plastic pail with a thick wet sound. His name was Fred, but his nametag said Bob. He didn't look up at Robert.

Robert, this particular Robert, was aware of the conspiracy before most people. Most people never found out anyway even through it was on the national news for several seconds on two separate occasions before Robert Fordham went insane. After that it was on it least once more. It was only slightly more difficult to be oblivious to these things in the academic community. If his name was not Robert Fordham, and hearing Robert Fordham vocalized did not trigger that recognition, he may have stood still while the sound waves passed by him like most of his classmates had. He forgot where he was going, and remembered. He opened a door that was already half open in one of the right angles of the hallway. There was talking and then silence. There were faces unfamiliar and seconds of indecisive confusion. He walked away embarrassed.

On a television screen no less than thirty-five yards away, but also on many as far as 5,000 miles away was Robert Fordham, an insane Robert Fordham, who claimed to be *the Robert Fordham*. *yes and some literary and historical scholars are even beginning to openly speculate about travel throu-* dont stand in front the tv with channel five is docto- the channel up arrow was pressed by elderly fingers that often found the news unsettling, especially when they talked about all that medical stuff he did not understand. *-ith the death of one Robert Fordham who in his suicide note claims to have discovered a passage through time nothi-* again fingers pressed buttons looking for cartoons, looking for the weather, and all over the world talking figures disappeared and were replaced with other glowing images. In the fourth and fifth pages of newsprint nothing changed.

He left his bag of books neglected in the corner, and he began to lie on his back in the sun that fell through the crack between the midtown buildings and think about

his favorite books and which ones he would like to have written and what a laudably variable prose style he would give Robert Fordham.



*Killing Time ~ Katie E. Lee*



## The Fool

The fool sits in the corner  
handcuffed to the chair.  
He speaks to himself  
unmoving.

Holding a conversation  
with the wall with two ears  
about thoughts on problems and healing.

The fool has the key  
to the handcuffs and door  
of his padded cell.

His straight jacket is loose;  
his feet are poised ready to stand.

The insane he cries out,  
pushes through walls and  
affects the other side.

The wall with two ears has  
curled up and died.  
There is nothing left.

*~Lauren Robertson*

## Blackbirds

Looking at the clouds, lying on my back,  
an image of a dachshund chasing a dinosaur  
hangs in the sky.

Dollops of cloud placed all at perfect altitude,  
as if a piece of glass were suspended and the dough  
were neatly arranged on this cookie sheet of sky.  
Birds fly and slice through the air chattering about the  
day,

    how chilly it is  
    how far south they should fly,  
    and the number of eggs to lay --  
    when the time comes.

They land on the branches  
of a nearby pine  
and move on to other things.

*~Claire Baker*

## Cult Drifting

There is no way for me to trust anyone again.  
No way to trust that a leader, teacher, or counselor is not  
    convincing me to take a wrong turn.  
No way to trust that an interested man is not taking advantage of  
    my altered state.  
No way to trust that  
    I can make correct decisions for myself.  
My mind, heart, and body are all  
    Tainted, twisted, coiled.  
No complete recovery is anticipated.  
I will probably always drift in and out of  
    cult consciousness.  
Membership here finalizes  
    the decimation of my spirit  
    that I had already initiated.

No one forced me into a cult.  
I asked for it. Begged and prayed  
    on bended knee with hands clasped, eyes burning,  
    head and heart aching.  
I pleaded and screamed for  
    someone to take over my life.  
I confused humility with low self-esteem,  
    pride in self with prejudice against others.  
I confused love and loyalty for  
    lap-dog obedience and obeisance.  
If I ever recover from this altered state, I will still  
    always doubt everything and everyone,  
    including, or starting with, myself.

I should have just taken the toke or had the affair.  
Leaving either of those would have been  
    easier, more certain, life-affirming.  
I made the wrong choice, again.

Overdosing on obedience masked as spirituality was  
certain prescription for  
a lifetime of death.

I'll always drift between certainty and confusion,  
church and cult,  
faith and faintheartedness.

I'm the only one to blame.

*~Lesa Johnson*

## The Modern Wonka Love Song of S.G. Prufrock

Come with me and you'll be in a world of  
pure imagination.  
A world of cars that break down.  
Computers break down.  
ATM Machines break down.  
Lives break down.  
Money can't make you happy?  
In this world money fixes everything.  
Give it to me. I promise I will be elated.  
If only for a little while I will have a smile and I will  
feel pretty and witty and gay.  
And oh so charming. Is that alarming for me to say?  
To want to live life this way?

Maybe I will find my happiness in another person.  
Let's hit the clubs of my imagination.  
Let's go to "Begging Zone" or "Zango" or "Level 3."  
I see them there, the Ovids of the world.  
And in the room they stand while the girls come and go  
speaking of DeAngelo.  
Do I dare disrupt the fabric of time?  
Do I dare?  
I don't know because my bed feels so cozy.

While in the room the guys they stand.  
And in the room the girls come and go  
speaking of DeAngelo.

*~Shaquana Grant*

## **Tonka Brown**

*Brian Gullberg*

On the night Tonka Brown died the temperature dropped to thirty below.

Tonka was born to a poor family, left school at fifteen to work. Five hours a day at the grocery store and five hours at the docks. He switched to a mechanic's shop at seventeen. Began fixing planes at eighteen at a private air field. By twenty-one Tonka was in a hot war zone mostly repairing small plane engines.

The small planes were used to ship small boxes into small hands on a mountain top airfield. Once when one of these boxes blew up, Tonka was burned but he survived.

At twenty-five Tonka started driving a truck. He drove big air conditioned trucks from the coast to Las Vegas. The cargo was preserved against the heat; in the cab Tonka rolled down the windows. He lived in an apartment. If he listened above the clutter around him he could hear the ocean.

Tonka met Maj at a record shop. They were married six months later. While driving his long routes he would smile at the thought of her. They moved into a house, had children.

When Tonka was thirty- three the driver's union dissolved. Tonka's pay was cut and he had to work harder for the same amount of pay. A year later Tonka and Maj were divorced. Now Tonka worked even harder. After seven years of that Tonka gave up and walked away.

Tonka kept up with the seasons well; he had always had good strong legs. North in the summer and south in the winter. Up and down the East Coast. Most of the neighborhoods he would stop in were friendly. The charities and dumpsters were well funded. He slept where he could; most nights he was all right. Tonka kept his mind focused on one thing, slow measured breaths.

Slow measured breaths were for him. His wife had thought him kindly but slow. An employer once figured that Tonka was illiterate. They were both wrong; Tonka kept himself in check by slow measured breaths. It kept the storm at a distance.

Tonka's mother was told that her son was having epi-

leptic seizures. Tonka overheard this diagnosis. He was holding his breath at the time, released it slowly; he felt fine. Tried again. Slow measured breathes, no fainting, no spells, no problem. He just kept up this breathing. Over the years all of Tonka's reactions had been filtered through a slow measured breath. He never varied, no matter what the circumstances. All to keep the storm in his head quiet.

Tonka had been on the road, or at least the alley, for twenty years. Once he woke up in a hospital. Once he woke up in a hospital after being beaten. Off the highway, behind a large department store near the woods he set up his blankets. Old sheets hung around the fire pit he dug for himself. He had been moving slower this year. Maybe he could have been further south if he had really tried.

The dark blankets hid the light from the dying fire well. Covered properly with his clothes he lay down next to the fire and took a deep breath. Not too close, he knew a guy they said slept too close to the fire once and died. Always better to be a little away from the fire than too close. Right before he fell into sleep Tonka was sure his legs felt shaky.



## Inevitable

Advising a young child to lie,  
My desired response finds  
In its place  
A curious smile and question of why.

Trying to speak my mind,  
Useless attempts result  
Into a  
Fear irrepressible and memory confined.

Raising my hand an answer to find,  
Eyes look past me  
Calling on  
The person behind.

My feelings toward this life,  
My futile tries now  
Make me realize  
There is no need to fight.

*~E. Ashley Glenn*

## Passing Time

Lying on a stark, white hospital bed  
contemplating death and what it all  
will entail, coupling with the thoughts of birth  
and the strangeness of dying in  
the place where I was born.

Syringes, prepped and ready for a new day's work  
to save a life still may fail when it is  
a soul's time to fly. Cold stethoscopes  
and tongue depressors make interesting  
wall hangings and this English major wonders what  
all the numbers on the blood pressure machine  
alert doctors to do. I could ask a Nursing major.

A nurse with Linus, Lucy, and Charlie Brown  
on her sleeves and a smile on her lips  
does all she can to make me more comfortable.  
A pre-warmed blanket and an extra pillow  
assist my neck in upholding my  
lethargic head before I am wheeled to surgery.

*~Claire Baker*

## The Mirror

It's in a mirror,  
a looking glass,  
that I see a young girl  
beautiful, lean, proper  
learning from a book.  
Reading so  
deep in thought.  
Suddenly  
she turns

around

and looks  
right at me,  
moving as though to look  
over my shoulder,  
but then through me,  
like looking for a ghostly sound.  
She is staring so hard,  
squinting eyes  
to make out  
my shape,  
my form,  
herself.

*~Lauren Robertson*

## Dreaming of Long Island

*John Dinkelmeier*

The deep blues and greens haunt my thoughts, and while I sit here contemplating matters of varying importance or unimportance, I eventually return to the glimmer of the sun setting on the waters of my home. The steady rising of a glistening wave, swelling up to boast of its magnificence, then ultimately foaming and breaking into ever-whiteness, bubbling and laughing as it breaks onto Long Island sand.

And there I am, legs dangling over the sides of my board, watching and waiting for the most opportune moment. Currents turn into patterns, and I attempt to keep my patience in check, walking the fine line of waiting for just the right wave, without missing out on a dozen equally good rides. The pattern turns to its softer side, and I'm back to lying on my stomach, switching my attention between the oncoming waves and the bright sand, now a patchwork of blankets, umbrellas, and people, soaking in more of the July sun than is good for them. Children run through the tidal pools, adorning themselves in the royal browns and greens of Ponquogue sea-weeds, giggling as an unexpected wave runs up the sand and laps at their feet.

Then lying on a towel, book in hand, is my Aphrodite. Her skin is burnished bronze from the past month, her thoughts in a distant land, dark brown eyes seeing all at once the pages of her novel, and the magnificent kingdoms that are engraved upon those pages. Chestnut locks tumble over her shoulders, covering the white sand that's been blown there by the gentle breeze. My face rumors a smile as I turn my gaze away.

My mind travels across the island, to the white cliffs at Shinnecock, rivaling Dover's elegance. Platinum sand rises from the calmer waters of the Sound, and I realize the intense beauty of my home: the obvious warmth over the summers, with the throngs of people rushing to the beaches, then months later the same shoreline, harnessing the intense beauty brought about by its lonesomeness.

The trance is broken by the increasing ups and downs, as the pattern once again turns aggressive, and the waves start to tower over my head. I turn around and search for a target, calculating position and speed, as the walls of water approach. Deftly I turn the board around, as I've done countless times, and dip my hands into the cool water. Pushing myself towards the shore, the desired wave starts to take control. For a moment I'm propelled by both self and nature, then rise to my feet, as the board skims down the face. My heart breaks into a canter, and I turn the nose, careful not to outrun this ride before it's over. Fiberglass slices through the foam, shooting diamonds into the air and soaking my face. Peripherals show solid green on one side and children watching on the other, pointing me out to their parents, who nod in half-amusement. Time is frozen in Atlantic water, seconds feel like minutes. Finally the race ends, and I jump off, fully submerging into the following wave. The familiar briny taste overpowers my mouth as I paddle back out, then turn, my only hope being to repeat that very journey as many times as possible in one afternoon. Looking over the sand once again, I notice a certain dark haired girl smile at me, then return her attention to a book.

Opening my eyes reveals, to my slight disappointment, that I am once again the captive of another professor. Sighing, I turn the next page of my book, knowing my thoughts will eventually lead me back to Ponquogue beach, and the coming summer.

## Gone

Confined within a silver cell,  
Prisoner of time  
With no parole.

Framed by one with a story to tell,  
Victim of life  
That keeps moving on.

Pictured by visitors as a moment surreal,  
Fools to reality  
How should they know?

Held hostage once by its captivating appeal,  
Now vacant eyes  
Reflect upon my face.

Life changes like color in fall,  
Paper fades with the smile.  
All that matters doesn't matter anymore.

*~E. Ashley Glenn*

## 410 Faulkner Street

Crunchy snow, my boots warm and leaving tracks  
so my cousin can hop and jump in the spaces I made,  
as we play follow the leader in the January weather.  
Icicles popping, crackling, melting, and falling to the  
ground

as the sun blazes through them,  
shattering their existence and  
smiling all the while.

Luke and I make snow angels and then soar like  
Snoopy as Flying Ace and the Red Baron  
across the back yard,  
around birches and bricks that are stacked  
to guard the flower beds from our romping ways.  
There are clouds beneath our noses and our  
sunburned cheeks, so we open the fogged  
sliding glass doors to greet the chocolate  
awaiting us with billowing marshmallow mountains  
about to have rivers of white froth cascading  
down the side of our mugs.

*~Claire Baker*

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